**Jim Metzger** (00:00): I'm Jim Metzger, and I am an economist and currently on the board of the Arkansas Humanities Council. I've lived in Little Rock for more than 30 years now. Moved here from Arizona. And before that, spent a lot of time in the Midwest and on the East Coast. So I moved around a little bit.

(00:17): During that time when I was a student in northern Indiana, it was the time of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s. And what I've thought about many times relative to being a citizen in the United States and voicing my opinion about things, political and cultural and social, and of course, voting. Once you go through the experience I'm going to talk about today, you are a confirmed voter for the rest of your life because you can't miss one opportunity to have that voice heard.

(00:48): But I noticed less targeted protest around key issues like the Vietnam War currently in our society. And I've thought about it and wondered why. My experience was somehow maybe different than the experience that young people are having today. I noticed, of course, protests that occurred, for example, right after the recent election in many cities across the country. People marched one day.

(01:19): But when the Vietnam War was going on in the late 1960s and early 70s, I mean, student protest was ongoing at many, many campuses throughout the country. My campus at Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana was just one of many where we had opportunities to voice our concern and, quite frankly, our opposition to what was going on in Southeast Asia.

(01:46): The reason I'm talking about that today or now is that a particular episode occurred just about 50 years ago to the day of when we're doing this interview, and this was a situation where recruiters had come to campus, these were recruiters for the CIA, which of course, is a government agency, very involved in intelligence gathering in Southeast Asia to support the war. And the Dow Chemical Company, which at that time was the main manufacturer of a chemical called napalm, which was used for widespread aerial bombing in Southeast Asia and was causing a lot of collateral damage they call it these days, a lot of civilians being killed and really women and children dying in a horrible fashion. It was just something that many of us couldn't countenance.

(02:37): So in this particular episode, we thought these people are recruiting on campus, we're going to stop them from doing that. Okay, this was our protest. Well, some of us hadn't taken seriously the fact that the university president at that time, Father Theodore Hesburgh, had issued a very careful statement about how we're only going to allow certain kinds of protests to occur on the campus.

(03:00): Other campuses had had some fairly, I don't know if I would necessarily call them violent, but disruptive of demonstrations and protests, furniture being broken and things being thrown out windows, et cetera, offices being taken over. Okay, I don't think anybody was actually killed in those episodes, but you could I guess say that was a violent form of demonstration.

(03:24): All we were trying to do was block a doorway to say you can't do that kind of recruiting for that kind of activity at this time of war on our campus. Well, the rule was you could do that for 15 minutes, and then if you didn't rethink your approach, your ID cards would be collected and you would be suspended from school. And many of us, there must have been 40 or 50 people in this demonstration, many of us I don't think took that all too seriously. We just thought, oh sure, that's what they're saying. Well, in fact, 10 of us did give up our ID cards and 10 of us were suspended or expelled from the university because of that activity.

(04:04): A lot of rethinking occurred after that in terms of the expulsions, and eventually the 10 students were summarily suspended but not expelled, so allowed to go back. And I did, in fact, graduate from Notre Dame, 1971.

(04:22): But also what happened on the other side was a tremendous, I guess, period of reconsidering what the university's function should be. Are they there to serve students, educate students, but also what is the role of the university in the larger society? Does their acquiescence in the activities of people like Dow Chemical Company or the CIA, does that present some kind of support for the broader public will, of the broader, I guess you would say policy decisions of the country? Does that mean that we support the war because we allow this sort of thing to happen? Is this being done knowingly or is this just being done as a byproduct of trying to serve student interests?

(05:14): So we are able to generate, I think, a lot of rethinking about the university itself, but also about the politics of the country at that time, about the stance of the public toward the war and how we communicate that opposition that we had to our representatives and to the government.

(05:39): Subsequent to that, that occurred in, as I said, the fall of 1969. Subsequent to that, of course, there was a march on Washington in May of 1970. Our own president of the university, the very person who had suspended all of us for our protest activity then announced publicly that he personally was opposed to the Vietnam War and wanted to convey that to the representatives and to the President for whom he had actually worked, President Nixon.

(06:12): So there were a lot of fractures in society at that time, and maybe the protests that we were able to mount in the fall of '69 had in some small way the effect of causing some people who were trying to decide what to do and what should be the right role for a university and are we on the right path with our foreign policy and with our military action to reconsider those positions in between election years because we don't always get a chance to vote every time an issue like this comes up.

(06:47): So I think protest has a way of bringing those issues to the foreground when we don't have a conventional way of doing that, like the ballot box.